



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/765,881	01/16/2001	Vernon E. Mc George JR.	10992444-1	9291

7590 01/27/2005
HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400

EXAMINER

CHRISTMAN, KATHLEEN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3713

DATE MAILED: 01/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

92

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	09/765,881		MC GEORGE ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Kathleen M Christman		3713	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 December 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 7-15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 18 and 19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 08 January 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 3713

DETAILED ACTION

In response to the election filed 12/07/2004, claims 1-19 are pending.

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 7-15 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 12/07/2004.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 18 and 19 are objected to because of the following informalities: The applicant has included the limitations of "question ID" and "choice ID" into the claims. Although it is clear that the applicant is referring to the "question code" and "choice code" the applicant is required to use consistent terminology throughout the claims, so as to avoid confusion. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requires of this title.

3. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth in a two-prong test of:

(1) whether the invention is within the technological arts; and

(2) whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

Art Unit: 3713

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must be within the technological arts. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e., abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject matter. For a process claim to pass muster, the recited process must somehow apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

In the present case, the method of claims 1-6 fails to apply, involve, use or advance the technological arts. The recited steps of defining questions and potential answers, assigning question codes and a plurality of choice codes, creating question choice records, presenting the questions and presenting the potential answers does not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. These steps only constitute an idea of how to create and present a question to a user..

Additionally, for a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the present case, the claimed invention produces questions and associated potential answers (i.e., repeatable) used in the administration of a survey(i.e., useful and tangible).

Although the recited process produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result, since the claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the technological arts as explained above, claim 1 is deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter. The subject matter of claims 2-6 fails to correct this deficiency, and are thus rejected for the same reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

Art Unit: 3713

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-6, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Peters et al (US 5842195). Peters et al teaches a computer based method, system and computer readable medium including: defining a question for presentation in a survey (the question text, col. 14: 26-31); defining a plurality of potential answers, each one of said plurality of potential answers corresponding to said question (the option text, col. 14: 57-64); assigning a question code to said question (the database field name, col. 14: 65+); assigning a plurality of choice codes, one of each said choice codes assigned uniquely to each one of said plurality of potential answers (the "on selection database field value", col. 15: 53-59); creating question choice records for associating question code with each choice code (the database itself); presenting said question to a survey participant, and presenting said set of potential answers to said survey participant in accordance with said question choice records (the actual administration of the survey, col. 32: 24-50), as in **claim 1**, and substantially similar limitations in **claims 18 and 19**. Creating an answer record to associate said choice code of a selected answer with said question code (**claim 2**), is taught in Figure 14. Assigning a choice type to said choice code to define the format of the answer solicited by said question (**claim 3**) is shown in at least col. 12: 55 - col. 13: 17. The answer format may be multiple-choice format, col. 12: 57-59, and further allows for entry of both numeric and text data, col. 13: 1-3. The author is allowed to specify a follow-up question for a predetermined said potential answer (**claim 5**), said follow-up questions being presented to the survey participant (**claim 6**), as is shown in at least col. 13: 44-46 and col. 15: 23-36, as a "Go To" or "Branch-To" question.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.
- a. Hamlin et al (US 6477504) teaches a method of authoring and conducting surveys
 - b. Callender (US 2002/0119433) teaches a method and system for creating questions for surveys

Art Unit: 3713

- c. West et al (US 6175833) teaches a method and system for administering surveys
- d. Nelson (US 202/0120491) teaches a method and system for the administration of surveys

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kathleen M Christman whose telephone number is (571) 272-4435. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached on (571) 272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Kathleen M Christman
Examiner
Art Unit 3713

January 26, 2005